



The Editor, Times and Transcript, Moncton

Dear Sir,

The New Brunswick Wildlife Federation would like to address comments made in your publication on September 7, 2018 concerning Larry's Gulch.

Your article is directed at the idea that the whole reason for the people of New Brunswick to own this facility is to make a profit. That never was the idea nor should it ever be. Larry's Gulch provides an opportunity for New Brunswickers to showcase the natural wonders of this province to folks who might want to live and invest here. It also provides a rare opportunity for the average New Brunswick angler to participate in the Restigouche River's salmon fishery, where for the most part salmon lodges are largely in private clubs or corporate interests. It is both a very valuable promotional tool and unique opportunity, and should remain just that.

We shared our view when your newspaper took issue with Larry's Gulch ownership in 2015, and we were pleased to see that the government moved toward strengthening the business model rather than discarding this wonderful facility. Unfortunately, its management partner, a long-established private club on the river, could not sustain its collaboration. We won't speculate on the cause, but we were pleased to see that the government sustained the lodge's operation under new management.

With regards the \$22,000 acquisition cost to the province, you should know that the payment was to acquire "all rights, title and interest of A.J. Murray in the fishing lodge and associated buildings and equipment located on Crown land fronting on the Restigouche River near Kedgwick.". The land and all fishing rights were already the property of the Crown. This payment was for the surrendering any leasehold interest Mr. Murray held in the land and fishing rights and also to purchase his ownership of the buildings and equipment.

You mention the \$300,000 annual operating cost for the facility. We believe that you should have made the clear statement that, over the eleven years period 2003-4 to 2014-15, Larry's average annual deficit was only \$14,000 and that you should have stated that this makes the net operating cost of this valuable asset negligible. Additionally, we would point out that a significant part of this cost goes toward valuable employment for New Brunswick residents.

Your readers should be aware that in addition to a resident draw for access, the province offers, at no charge, a number of trips to not-for-profit organizations around the province to be used for fund raising opportunities. Significant funds are raised and used for a wide array of good conservation and education works within New Brunswick. We are certain that these opportunities would not be available should the lodge be in private hands and many resident anglers would never have an opportunity of fishing there.

You go on to mention that a trip to the camp is at a cost of \$26,000. You fail to mention that the cost is shared by up to 16 anglers, that is \$1,625 per angler. That is very close to market value for fishing on the Restigouche system

In short, we do not take the position the Gulch should be operated as a profit centre. Further, we disagree with the opinion, which has been expressed in this publication in the past, that it is time to sell this facility, quite the contrary. This is a very valuable asset of the people of this province and we should continue to use it as it was intended to be used.

Respectfully submitted by;
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